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## **SPECIAL MEETING OF THE KING COUNTY BOARD OF ETHICS 1999 RETREAT**

Date: Saturday, January 9, 1999  
Time: 8:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.  
Location: 304F HUB, University of Washington

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### **AGENDA**

8:00 a.m.	8:15 a.m.	Arrival; light refreshment (coffee, tea, juice, muffins, fruit)
8:15 a.m.	8:45 a.m.	1998 Annual Report
8:45 a.m.	9:45 a.m.	Identification of 1999 Mission and Goals
9:45 a.m.	10:30 a.m.	Discussion of 2000 Business Plan
10:30 a.m.	10:45 a.m.	<i>Break</i>
10:45 a.m.	11:30 a.m.	Discussion of collaborative opportunities with other ethics boards. Guest: Carolyn M. Van Noy, Executive Director, Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission
11:30 a.m.	12:15 p.m.	Executive Session
12:15 p.m.		Adjourn

The January 9, 1999 special meeting and retreat of the King County Board of Ethics was called to order by Chair Price Spratlen at 8:15 a.m. Board members in attendance:

Dr. Lois Price Spratlen, Chair  
Mr. Roland H. Carlson  
Judge Paul M. Feinsod  
Lembhard G. Howell, Esq.  
Rev. Paul F. Pruitt

Others in attendance:

Ms. Catherine A. Clemens, Administrator, King County Board of Ethics  
Mr. James J. Buck, Acting Deputy Director, Department of Information and Administrative Services  
Ms. Sheryl V. Whitney, Director, Department of Information and Administrative Services (leaving at 10:15 a.m.)  
Ms. Carolyn M. Van Noy, Executive Director, Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission (arriving at 10:15 a.m., leaving at 11:30 a.m.)

1. *Agenda.* Mr. Howell moved the agenda be approved; Mr. Carlson seconded the motion and the agenda was approved.

2. *Annual Report.* Ms. Clemens briefed the Board on the 1998 Annual Report and reviewed the mission and goals against measurable results. She noted that all goals and initiatives had been accomplished on time and under budget. Chair Price Spratlen expressed her pleasure with the outcomes identified in the report. She also wished to clarify instances in the report which refer to 'the Board' accomplishing certain tasks, such as training and education. She stated that her purpose was to make clear who is doing what activity, and to ensure Ms. Clemens is identified and acknowledged for her work.

Training and education statistics indicated the Administrator trained 1,318 employees over 21 hours, a 100% increase over last year in both numbers of employees and hours of training. New employees made up 88% of those trained. Ms. Clemens stated her goal is to increase supervisor training, since their impact on departmental ethics was far-reaching. The Board agreed with this strategy. Judge Feinsod suggested the option of training 'trainers' within the departments. Mr. Carlson stressed that reaching supervisors was the crucial link, so that they might make good decisions based on ethics education and understanding of the Code. Ms. Whitney noted that the Office of Human Resource Management is looking at ways to improve training for supervisors, in part because claims against the county for various reasons are on a sharp increase. Ms. Whitney asked Ms. Clemens to remind her to discuss with OHRM director Ricardo Cruz how to help achieve the Board's goal to reach supervisors. Ms. Clemens stated she was working with OHRM staff to put training on the internet for stand-alone training or in combination with subsequent in-person training. Ms. Whitney stated she liked this idea because employees had access to information right away. Rev. Pruitt noted it is a good option for some who might not wish to go through a supervisor, for whatever reason. Chair Price Spratlen also suggested that the Executive appear at training sessions or provide a letter for training packets stating the importance of ethics in his administration.

The Board agreed that information and education programs are working. Judge Feinsod noted the number of advisory opinions are down and staff informational responses are up, indicating employees are receiving the information they need without asking for formal opinions.

The Board briefly discussed the policy related to speaking to the press, specifically regarding Harborview Board of Trustees. Chair Price Spratlen stated she declines to speak to the press on an issue currently before the Board. She wanted to depart from past practices and stated that policy is not made in the newspaper. Mr. Howell agreed. Judge Feinsod suggested adding this issue to the

day's agenda if there was time, since there had been criticism about lack of responsiveness from the Board. He suggested the Board might ask itself how it could use that criticism constructively.

Ms. Clemens reviewed staff leadership in regional and national conferences. Chair Price Spratlen commented that she would like the Board of Ethics to play a role in the June conference, highlighting how boards may make a difference.

Mr. Buck reported on the status of the administrative policy and proposed ordinance for financial disclosure forwarded to the Executive earlier in the year. Both are still in process and Ms. Whitney stated she would make it her responsibility to remind the Executive to respond. She also reported that, regarding the lobbyist disclosure ordinance, she is receiving legal advice on policies and procedures. She does not yet know who will administer the program within her department.

The Board discussed the budget. For budgetary reasons, the request for a .5 FTE was not included in the 1999 request; however, Mr. Whitney discussed the option of 'loaned' staff from within DIAS. She requested Ms. Clemens provide a list of discreet tasks of what was needed and when. Chair Price Spratlen stated that the office is accomplishing real work and she would like to see corresponding, ongoing support for predictable blocks of time each week. Ms. Whitney acknowledged Mr. Buck's work in absorbing budget cuts that would have been taken from the Ethics budget. Mr. Howell expressed appreciation but also wanted it noted that the office came in under budget. The Board discussed cost cutting measures including unpaid, academic credit internships.

Chair Price Spratlen wished to commend Ms. Clemens on her accomplishments and leadership this year. The Board agreed, noting she had stayed on task, accomplished a great deal, and kept expenses under budget. The Chair stated the report will be an excellent reference document when she and Judge Feinsod meet informally with the Executive on January 26, 1999.

3. *Identification of 1999 Mission and Goals.* After review of the 1998 mission and goals, the Board agreed to formally reverse goal I and II, placing education and training above providing timely advice and guidance. Ms. Clemens suggested changing the word "network" to "collaborate with" in Goal IV. Mr. Howell then moved to approve the mission and goals with changes; Mr. Carlson seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved the 1999 Mission and Goals.

4. *Discussion of 2000 Business Plan* The Board discussed issues affecting the work of the Board, including budget, new initiatives, existing programs, equipment needs, office support, charging fees for training, technology, and collaborative opportunities within and without King County. The Board was not in favor of charging a fee for training since it is a central part of the executive's administration. Ms. Whitney noted that technically the Board could not charge a fee since departments were already assessed for such services in a general way. The Board discussed charging for training to outside entities, but determined they would address such issues on a case-by-case basis. Regarding equipment needs, Ms. Whitney stated the Board did not need to concern itself with those issues, since equipment was provided by the department and would be addressed at that level. Ms. Clemens underscored the need to keep in mind the realities of limited resources as we identify new directions and initiatives. Mr. Carlson requested the Administrator to keep the Board informed. The Board discussed the move to the Bank of California Building, and Ms. Clemens distributed a layout of the new office. Chair Price Spratlen acknowledged Ms. Whitney's and Mr. Buck's efforts to locate this new space, and thanked them.

The Board adjourned for a break from 10:00 a.m. until 10:15 a.m.

5. *Discussion of Collaborative Opportunities with Other Ethics Boards.* Ms. Van Noy described the structure and work of the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission (SEEC) and identified its members, half of whom are lawyers. The group discussed conflict resolution and the comfort level of individuals making judgments upon others and determining violations. They also discussed the state of

volunteerism in America and the difficulty of finding qualified people able and willing to serve. SEEC members generally contribute four hours per month; the Chair spend more time.

The group also discussed the importance of keeping retiring members involved, and Ms. Van Noy described the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL) model, in which past presidents and officers serve on a long range planning committee. There are no regular meetings or schedules, but come together over projects on an *ad hoc* basis. Ms. Clemens and Ms. Van Noy reported on the COGEL structure and the collaborative opportunities available there, including the web site, discussion groups, peer interaction, and conferences. Everyone agreed that the quality of the conferences is excellent. Chair Price Spratlen expressed the Board's appreciation to Mr. Buck for the county's contribution to the COGEL conference and for the opportunity for the Board to attend.

The Board and staff discussed collaborative opportunities between the Ethics Board and SEEC, including board and staff training; invitations to the Board's annual reception extended to the SEEC; development of orientation and recruitment materials; defining the role of board members; and development of a long range planning and advisory body. Ms. Van Noy stated she was not attending this meeting with SEEC suggestions, but would be happy to take these ideas back to the Commission for further discussion. The Board thanked Ms. Van Noy for attending. Ms. Clemens also thanked Ms. Van Noy for her collaborative style and generous support of the work of the Board.

6. *Executive Session.* At 11:36 a.m. the Chair requested that the meeting move into executive session for the purpose of discussing the annual evaluation of the Administrator. Ms. Clemens and Mr. Buck left the room. At 11:54 a.m., the Board asked Mr. Buck to return to the meeting.

At 12:23 p.m. the Board completed the executive session and resumed its regular meeting.

Chair Price Spratlen thanked everyone for attending the retreat. At 12:27 p.m., Mr. Howell moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Carlson seconded the motion; the motion was approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.

Approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 1999 by the King County Board of Ethics.

Signed for the Board: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Lois Price Spratlen, Chair